

## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

### Listing of Claims:

1-13. (Cancelled)

14. (Currently amended) Method of promoting growth ~~[[in]]~~ of an animal, comprising the step of:

feeding the animal with an F4+ non-pathogenic *Escherichia coli* strain, wherein the F4+ non-pathogenic *Escherichia coli* strain is in an amount effective to promote growth ~~[[in]]~~ of the animal.

15. (Cancelled)

16. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 14, wherein the step of feeding comprises feeding orally.

17. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 16, wherein ~~the step of feeding comprises feeding the~~ said F4+ non-pathogenic *Escherichia coli* strain is in association with an acceptable carrier, ~~wherein the carrier is selected from the group consisting of a solid feed acceptable carrier, [[or]] a liquid feed acceptable carrier, or combinations~~ and a combination thereof.

18. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 17, wherein the ~~carrier comprises a solid feed acceptable carrier~~ comprising comprises a common solid feedstuff.

19. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 17, wherein the ~~carrier comprises a liquid feed acceptable carrier~~ comprising comprises water.

20. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 17, wherein the ~~carrier comprises a liquid feed acceptable carrier~~ comprising comprises milk.

21. **(Previously presented)** The method according to claim 14, wherein the effective amount is at least about  $5 \times 10^7$  CFU of F4+ non-pathogenic *Escherichia coli* strain per animal.
22. **(Previously presented)** The method according to claim 14, wherein the effective amount ranges from about  $5 \times 10^7$  to about  $5 \times 10^9$  CFU of F4+ non-pathogenic *Escherichia coli* strain per animal.
23. **(Previously presented)** The method according to claim 14, wherein the F4+ non-pathogenic *Escherichia coli* strain consists of the *Escherichia coli* strain deposited at the International Depository Authority of Canada (IDAC) on January 21, 2005 under accession number IDAC 210105-01, mutants or variants thereof.
24. **(Currently amended)** The method according to claim 14, wherein the animal is selected from the group consisting of a post-weaning animal, a post-hatching animal, and ~~combinations~~ a combination thereof.
25. **(Previously presented)** The method according to claim 24, wherein the animal is a post-weaning animal aged from about 10 to about 28 days old.
26. **(Previously presented)** The method according to claim 24, wherein the animal is a post-hatching animal aged from about 1 to about 7 days old.
27. **(Previously presented)** The method according to claim 24, wherein the animal is a post-weaning pig.
28. **(Previously presented)** The method according to claim 24, wherein the animal is a post-weaning mouse.
29. **(Previously presented)** The method according to claim 24, wherein the animal is a post-hatching poultry animal.
30. **(Previously presented)** The method according to claim 29, wherein the poultry animal is a chicken.

31-39. **(Cancelled)**

40. **(New)** The method according to claim 14, wherein said F4+ non-pathogenic *Escherichia coli* strain promotes daily weight gain.

41. **(New)** The method according to claim 14, wherein said F4+ non-pathogenic *Escherichia coli* strain promotes weight gain while reducing feed intake.

42. **(New)** The method according to claim 14, wherein said F4+ non-pathogenic *Escherichia coli* strain is fed to the animal during the animal's growth phase and reduces the delay required for the animal to attain a desired weight.